

Severe Weather

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WEBSITES

State of Florida: 2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, FL 32399-2101; Phone: 850-413-9969

Website: <http://www.floridadisaster.org>

Hillsborough County: 2711 E. Hanna, Tampa, FL 33610; Phone: 813-236-3800; Fax: 813-272-6878

Website: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/emergency>

Pasco County: 7530 Little Road, New Port Richey, FL 34654; Phone: 727-847-8137,

Website: <http://www.pascoemergencymanagement.com>

Pinellas County: 400 S. Fort Harrison Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33756; Phone 727-464-3800, Fax 727-464-4024

Website: <http://www.pascocounty.org/emergency/>

SAFETY TIPS

Hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning are all hazards we need to be aware of when living in central Florida. The Tampa Bay area is known as the “Lightning Capital of the United States,” and not just because of our hockey team! In the summertime we often have thunder-storms every afternoon, and with thunderstorms, lightning usually follows. Tornadoes also come with severe weather so you need to be aware of the possibility. Always check the weather before planning outdoor activities and have a plan in case severe weather strikes while you are outside. Hurricanes are another weather event you need to be aware of when assigned to CENTCOM and working at MacDill AFB, see below for more in-depth information.

LIGHTNING

In the United States, there are an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes each year. Lightning can be fascinating to watch, but it is also extremely dangerous. During the past 30 years, lightning killed an average of 67 people per year in the United States based on documented cases. We have the most lightning strikes recorded here in the Tampa Bay area, hence the title “Lightning Capital of the US.” Seek shelter (not under a tree) from the storm until it passes.

If you are on the MacDill flight line, or anywhere on base, listen to the “BIG VOICE” system which will alert you of any weather events. Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain area in a thunderstorm. That’s about the distance you can hear thunder. When a storm is 10 miles away, it may even be difficult to tell a storm is coming. Use the 30-30 rule where visibility is good and there is nothing obstructing your view of the thunderstorm. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within 6 miles of you and is dangerous.

Seek shelter immediately. The threat of lightning continues for much longer period than most people realize. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter. Don't be fooled by sunshine or blue sky! **IF YOU CAN HEAR THUNDER, YOU ARE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE. SEEK SAFE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!**

Inside homes, people must also avoid activities which put their lives at risk from a possible lightning strike. As with the outdoor activities, these activities should be avoided before, during, and after storms. In particular, people should stay away from windows and doors and avoid contact with anything that conducts electricity. People may also want to take certain actions well before the storm to protect property within their homes, such as electronic equipment.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

For the East Coast of the United States, hurricane season is 1 June through 30 November. The most active months are August, September and October, with the first two weeks of September being the peak of the season. We are highlighting how to be prepared in the event of a hurricane. Get a copy of the hurricane tracking map, most grocery stores have them before the start of the season. The next section are the evacuation maps for Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties that are also available on the county’s emergency planning sections of their web pages. Know what to do before the first hurricane forms, if a hurricane is on the way it may be too late. Where will you go if you are evacuated? Have a plan!

Hurricane hazards come in many forms: storm surge, high winds, tornadoes, and flooding. This means it is important for your family to have a plan that includes all of these hazards. Look carefully at the safety actions associated with each type of hurricane hazard and prepare your family disaster plan accordingly. The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense. You should be able to answer the following questions before a hurricane threatens:

What are the Hurricane Hazards? What does it mean to you? What actions should you take to be prepared?

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to **storm surge, flooding and wind**.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles. Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate. Shelters do not accept pets.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Check your insurance coverage - flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a Disaster Supply Kit, see the article on the next page for suggestions
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every 6 months, as you do with your smoke detectors.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.
- Visit these Web sites for more information
 - <http://www.centcom.mil/hurrprep/>
 - <http://www.tbo.com>
 - http://www.nhc.noaa.v/HAW2/english/prepare/family_plan.shtml
 - <http://www.baynews9.com/Hurricane.html>

The following numbers will be active and manned only in the event of an actual hurricane threatening MacDill AFB
CENTCOM Command Center 1-866-656-7754, 6th Air Mobility Wing 1-800-435-9941

ARE YOU READY?

- ✓ Know your evacuation zone. Plan to relocate if your home is in an evacuation zone or is a mobile home.
- ✓ Ensure your directorate's Disaster Preparedness Officer or designated Point of Contact knows your anticipated evacuation location. Find refuge with a friend, co-worker, relative or at a hotel outside the evacuation zone. Also include anticipated location of dependents if you expect separate locations. Include email addresses and telephone numbers for each location.
- ✓ Make a complete inventory of personal property; take photo or video of major items. Bring the photos/video with you.
- ✓ Create a household disaster plan. Plan to meet your family in case you are separated. Choose an out-of-town contact for everyone to call to say they are safe. Locate the nearest public shelter as a back up to your primary plan.
- ✓ Ensure you have adequate insurance for vehicles, personal property, and real estate. If you rent or lease an apartment, ensure you have a "renter's insurance policy" and that your geographic location and residence are accurately recorded with your insurance company.
- ✓ Obtain supplies to protect your property and for survival.
- ✓ Keep a Photo I.D. with your current address. This may become important when asking a police officer or National Guardsman for permission to re-enter your neighborhood.
- ✓ Fuel all your vehicles.
- ✓ Clear your yard of anything the wind could toss around.
- ✓ Get a supply of cash. During the recovery period, checks and credit cards may not be accepted and ATMs may not be working.
- ✓ As a minimum, prepare yourself to be without food and water for at least 3 days
- ✓ Constantly monitor weather reports on television or radio. Hurricanes typically move at a forward speed of 8 to 25 miles per hour. This means an approaching storm can move up to 200 miles during the course of a normal work day. Bay News 9, 970am, and the Weather Channel are two examples of weather information. You can follow the storms online at www.tbo.com www.nhc.noaa.gov www.hurricane.weathercenter.com

HURRICAN READY KIT

As a minimum, prepare yourself to be without food and water for at least three days.

Items can be stored in plastic garbage cans with lids or waterproof containers.

Items needed when you go to a shelter are marked with a *.

The following are suggested items for your hurricane ready kit:

***Valuables/important papers (director
recall list, insurance, medical records, bank
account numbers, Social Security card, keys
to house & car, list of phone numbers, wills,
birth certificates, ID Cards, etc) in
waterproof containers**

**Review this inventory at the beginning of each hurricane season,
replacing batteries, foods, water, etc. with fresh stock for the new
season. Make sure items are located in an easily accessible and safe
place.**

- ☐ Canned, non-perishable foods, snacks. A non-electric can opener.
- ☐ Water - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days
- ☐ Cooking items (pots, pans, knives, cutting board) and eating utensils.
- ☐ Camp stove (with fuel)
- ☐ Lantern (with fuel)
- ☐ Butane lighter or matches
- ☐ Several flashlights and fresh batteries.
- ☐ A portable, battery operated radio, a NOAA Weather Radio, & batteries.
- ☐ Cell phone, extra battery
- ☐ A Camera with extra film to record storm damage to property
- ☐ Battery operated clock
- ☐ Zip-lock bags (to protect valuables)
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags (put over clothes in closet, insert bedding, etc)
- ☐ A portable cooler and ice. Always keep extra blocks of ice in freezer.
- ☐ Special Items - for babies and the elderly (medicines)
- ☐ Baby food, formula, diapers, baby wipes
- ☐ Games and books for children, CD player with ear phones.
- ☐ Bedding, pillows, blankets or sleeping bags (1 blanket/sleeping bag per person), air mattress
- ☐ Iodine or other water purification tablets.
- ☐ Bleach, to sanitize everything
- ☐ Candles and matches.
- ☐ Clothing - seasonal / rain gear/ sturdy shoes
- ☐ First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs
- ☐ Toiletries/Hygiene items/Moisture wipes (toothpaste, toilet paper, soap).
- ☐ Vehicle fuel tanks filled
- ☐ Pet care items (proper ID/immunization records/ medications), ample supply of food and water, a carrier/cage, muzzle and leash
- ☐ Canned drinks (water, juice, sodas)
- ☐ Mosquito repellent
- ☐ Clothes & dish detergent, sponge, bowl to wash in
- ☐ Clothesline and pins
- ☐ Masking tape, Plastic drop cloths
- ☐ Fire extinguisher - ABC type
- ☐ Cleaning supplies for after -Brooms & mops, pails, buckets, sponges, rags
- ☐ Comfortable clean work clothes and sturdy shoes/boots
- ☐ Gloves & goggles
- ☐ Small tools (hammer, screwdrivers, wrench, etc)
- ☐ Ladders, Wheelbarrow, rope, Plywood & nails
- ☐ Rakes & shovels, Axes, hatchets, pruners, Chain saw, gas & oil
- ☐ Duct and masking tape, Rolls of plastic

HURRICANES MAY LAST FOR HOURS

Dangerous winds hit long before the most powerful winds arrive.

High winds will continue after the center passes.

They also can spawn tornadoes far from the storm's center and its most powerful winds.

Do not expect help at the height of the storm.

Emergency workers, police, firefighters and ambulances get off the roads when winds reach about 40 mph because travel is too dangerous. Stay in a room without windows and with no, or few, exterior walls.

Stay out of the garage.

The garage door can be one of the most vulnerable parts of your home.

SEVERE STORM SCALES/CATERGORIES

Tropical Depression: Winds: 20-34 knots (38 mph or less) No storm surge

Tropical Storm: Winds: 35-64 knots (39 to 73 mph) No storm surge

Hurricane Categories:

- Category 1 Winds of 64-82 knots (74-95 mph) Storm surge 4 to 5 feet above normal
- Category 2 Winds of 83-95 knots (96-110 mph) Storm surge 6 to 8 feet above normal
- Category 3 Winds of 96-113 knots (111-130 mph) Storm surge 9 to 12 feet above
- Category 4 Winds of 114 to 135 knots (131-155 mph) Storm surge 13 to 18 feet above normal
- Category 5 Winds above 135 knots (155 mph) Storm surge more than 18 feet above

Tornado Scale: Hurricanes often spawn small tornadoes. Tornadoes are ranked in the Fujita Tornado Scale according to wind speed.

- F-0: Up to 72 mph winds
- F-1: 73-112 mph winds
- F-2: 113-157 mph winds
- F-3: 158-206 mph winds
- F-4: 207-260 mph winds
- F-5: 261 mph and above winds

AFTER THE STORM

Check the ceilings for signs they could cave in. When going outside stay out of the water, floodwater is often contaminated by sewage and chemicals. It could be electrically charged by downed power lines. If your home is damaged take photographs. Notify your home owner's insurance agent. Make emergency repairs to prevent more damage and keep receipts for anything you buy. Food usually keeps 4 to 6 hours in the refrigerator; thawed food in freezer usually can be eaten if its temperature is below 50 degrees

EVACUATION

It could save your life. Evacuation zones are based on the expected storm surge from a hurricane that will push water levels up along coastlines and into bays and rivers. Don't just get in the car and drive without a plan for where to go. You should leave as soon as possible after the order is given. Traffic will only get worse the longer you delay. Evacuation orders are issued long before a storm hits. Officials try to allow for 12 to 15 hours of good weather, but the weather will get bad long before the storm makes landfall. Remember that bridges will be closed when winds top 40 mph, and by then water could be crashing over causeways. Everyone in a mobile home must evacuate no matter what size storm is approaching.